

# Environmental Justice news

A Newsletter from the EPA New England Environmental Justice Council



6th edition • December 2004

## Science of Environmental Justice Working Conference Guides EPA Research Agenda

On May 24-26, EPA New England, EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) and Boston University's School of Public Health (BUSPH) co-sponsored the Science of Environmental Justice (SEJ) Working Conference. The theme of the conference was: *Science to Action: Community-based Participatory Research and Cumulative Risk Analysis as Tools to Advance Environmental Justice in Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities*. Key topics included community-based participatory research, cumulative risk analysis, air toxics, asthma, children's

environmental health, land-based risks and water quality.

The SEJ Conference was a first-of-its-kind effort to focus on environmental justice science and research. It provided a forum in which 275 individuals, including scientists, technical experts, community leaders, non-profit groups, academia and government representatives, could work together to provide input on the future of the agency's research efforts.

*continued on page 2*



△ Conference participants discuss children's environmental health.

## EPA and East End Community Council Host Environmental Justice Tour and Forum in Bridgeport

On Aug. 24, nearly 100 individuals participated in a bus tour and discussion forum hosted by the East End Community Council (EECC) in Bridgeport, Conn., in partnership with the EPA New England's Urban Environmental Program, the

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the American Cancer Society, about environmental justice concerns in the East End neighborhood of the city. Bridgeport is the most densely populated city in Connecticut, with 94

percent minority residents and 45 percent of families living below the poverty line. In the East End neighborhood, there are more than 80 vacant lots, several inventoried Brownfields sites and illegal dumping of trash is a significant problem.

*continued on page 2*

### INSIDE

EJ News ..... 1

Office Notes ..... 3

Office Highlights ..... 5

Q & A..... 6

Grants ..... 7

EJ Profile ..... 9

Publication Updates ..... 11

Contacts ..... 14

## EJ Working Conference *cont.*

Participants came from 25 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

“We all want to make a difference and support healthy, sustainable communities,” said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA’s New England office. “This working conference has started to move science to action to address environmental justice concerns across the nation.”

The three-day conference was designed to provide an interactive, educational forum joining together stakeholders from across the country to discuss current efforts in community-based participatory research and cumulative risk analysis that are helping to assess, address and resolve environmental and public

health risks in urban, suburban and rural areas.

During the first day of the conference, participants attended a bus tour of Chelsea and East Boston, Mass., which illustrated some of the communities’ most pressing environmental concerns. Representatives from two local community-based organizations, the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative and the Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, led the participants through the neighborhoods and highlighted environmental concerns, including lack of open and green space, limited waterfront access, numerous state-designated hazardous waste sites, heavy concentration of industries in a designated port area, traffic and air pollution. The tour provided

participants with a first-hand view of the disproportionate burdens that many low-income and minority communities face. It also served as preparation for the formal presentations and working sessions that followed.

The second day of the conference began with a morning plenary session focused on a discussion of cumulative risk assessment in environmental justice communities. An afternoon panel presentation on community-based participatory research complemented the morning discussion, and prepared the participants for further dialogue surrounding the direction of research within the agency.

The third and final day of the conference consisted of a morning

*continued on page 4*

## Bridgeport EJ Tour *cont.*

Before the tour, Mayor John Fabrizi, State Senator Ernest Newton and EECC Chairman Ted Meekins provided opening remarks. Two city buses carried participants on the 1½-hour tour. Participants included East End residents, clergymen, local business owners, city contractors and representatives from community organizations, city departments, Governor M. Jodi Rell’s Office, Congressman Christopher Shay’s Office and the state’s Departments of Environmental Protection and Housing and Urban Development.

Tour guides Meekins and EECC member Richard Womic pointed out the numerous abandoned cars, trash-strewn vacant lots, abandoned dilapidated houses and heavy industries located in close proximity to homes and play areas in the residential neighborhood. The buses stopped at one point and tour participants walked down Trowel Street past two Brownfields sites

adjacent and across from several homes to a littered area of land next to Johnson’s Creek that community members want revitalized into a community park. At the end of the bus tour, participants were dropped off at the Ralphola Taylor Center for community presentations and group discussion.

During the forum, EECC members and other residents discussed priority environmental, public health and quality of life issues, including the number of vacant lots and illegal dumping, high rates of lead poisoning, asthma and cancer, lack of affordable housing and the need for a local pharmacy and grocery stores.

At the forum—key politicians and city hall employees said they would make the East End a priority.

At the forum key politicians and city hall employees said they would make the East End a priority and committed to making the East End a healthier and cleaner place with more housing. James M. Younger, EPA New England Director of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, explained how these environmental and public health concerns raised by the community were an issue of quality of life and urged everyone to continue to be involved in the public participation process in Bridgeport.

A moderated question and answer session at the end of the forum helped community members come up with some next steps to address their concerns. The EECC plans to meet with the city’s health, zoning and housing departments, as well as the city’s illegal dumping coordinator, to begin a collaborative effort towards more comprehensively addressing the environmental injustices in the East End of Bridgeport. ☼

# Office Notes

## Staff Changes in the Office of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

### Recent Departures:

**Kathleen Castagna**, the region's former Environmental Justice Coordinator, joined the Office of Site Remediation and Restoration in August for a one year detail in the Brownfields Program.

"By working in the Brownfields program, I will have the opportunity to see EJ in action," said Castagna. "Many of the Brownfields projects directly benefit minority and low-income communities by empowering local redevelopment efforts in housing, open space, commercial development and other beneficial reuses of contaminated properties."

During her three-year tenure as Environmental Justice Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (OCRUA), Castagna made many significant contributions to both the regional and national Environmental Justice Programs. Castagna's noteworthy accomplishments include the development and implementation of the regional EJ Action Plan, providing EJ Awareness Training to all EPA New England staff, managing the EJ Small Grants Program and serving as Lead Region Coordinator for environmental justice.

**Julianne Pardi**, formerly of OCRUA, left EPA in August for a new job in the private sector.

### Recent arrivals:

Also in August, **Lois Adams**, former Rhode Island State Director in the Office of Ecosystem Protection, began a one year detail as Special Assistant to the Director of OCRUA. In this role Adams, with her extensive experience, knowledge and background in environmental justice as well as diversity issues, will assist in determining the strategic direction of the region's Environmental Justice and Civil Rights Programs.

**Sires Rivers**, formerly of the Office of Site Remediation and Restoration and a student at Bunker Hill Community College, joined OCRUA in September as a student aid.

**Halida Hatic**, a graduate student at Tufts University's Department of Urban Environmental Policy and Planning, and **Anastasia Cunningham**, an undergraduate political science student at Wellesley College, joined OCRUA in October through the Federal Career Experience Student Intern Program.

### Regional Indian Program Manager Jim Sappier Retires

On July 31, **Jim Sappier** retired his post as Regional Indian Program Manager after nearly a decade of service. Sappier has worked diligently since he came to the EPA New England to advocate for a "Federal Government-to-Tribal Government" working relationship. Sappier's experiences and accomplishments are countless. To list a few, he grew up on the

Jim Sappier grew up on the Penobscot Indian Reservation in Indian Island, located next to state of Maine.

Penobscot Indian Reservation in Indian Island, located next to state of Maine. He is an elder member of the Penobscot Nation and has served on a number of Tribal Committees, held various Tribal positions including Director and Tribal Administrator, and was elected as Penobscot Representative to the state of Maine Legislature, Lt. Governor and Tribal Governor. He was also the Executive Director of the United South and Eastern Tribes, an organization made up of all the Tribal Governments from Maine, to Florida, to Texas. Throughout his work and life, Sappier has demonstrated a long-standing dedication to the tribal program and his contributions have not gone unnoticed.



(From left) ECO interns Kristin Callahan from Bridgewater State College, Halida Hatic from Tufts University and Sarah Hoen from Cornell University met to discuss their projects this summer at EPA.

### EPA Funds Summer Internships Focused on EJ

The EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and the Environmental Careers Organization, Inc., continue their partnership to fund student internships at both local community organizations, through the Community Intern Program and regional EPA offices across the United States.

Through these programs, three students worked on environmental justice-related projects in New England this summer. **Kristin Callahan**, from Bridgewater State College worked at EPA New England to develop an environmental justice site tour with a partnering community group in Bridgeport, Conn.; **Halida Hatic**, from Tufts University worked at EPA New England to promote environmental justice training efforts among New England states; and **Molly Tsongas** from Brown University worked with Project Basic, Inc., to research school siting rules and set up a stakeholder group to promote healthy schools in Providence, R.I.

*More Office Notes on page 13*



## EJ Working Conference *cont.*



(From left) Keynote speaker H. Patricia Hynes, professor of environmental health BUSPH, and Stacey Johnson, of EPA New England's Urban Environmental Program, sort through the conference recommendations on asthma research needs.

session of concurrent panel presentations on the following key topics: Air Toxics, Asthma, Children's Environmental Health, Land-based Risks and Water Quality. Participants were actively involved in discussion sessions following individual panel presentations to identify key research needs and priorities for future action. Reports were presented from each of the concurrent morning workshops which identified key themes that emerged.

"The SEJ Conference was a

pioneering effort to bring community activists and environmental scientists together, in a dialogue about the content, methods and ethical principles of science done to support environmental justice," said keynote speaker H. Patricia Hynes, professor of environmental health at BUSPH. "The powerful participation of community activists in both plenary and work groups sessions and the sustained ideals of the EPA conference organizers are two of the most memorable pieces of the conference."

"This working conference has started to move science to action to address environmental justice concerns across the nation."

—Robert W. Varney, EPA New England Regional Administrator

Dr. Mildred McClain, Executive Director of Citizens for Environmental Justice in Savannah, GA, in her closing remarks, both encouraged and challenged all members of the audience to remember their active roles in continuing to move the environmental justice research agenda forward. Dr. McClain's passionate and eloquent final thoughts served as a call to action for all government agencies, academic institutions and local community-based organizations alike.

"The next step is to be found within each of us, the change and the next step begins with you," said McClain. "It will be you to reflect on what you heard, who you interacted with, what stuck with you and how you can use that to change what's going on where you are."

This conference successfully achieved an increased awareness of environmental justice for participants, recommendations to EPA for new research priorities to promote environmental justice and strategies to translate currently available and future research into action and policies that better address environmental justice concerns. The conference planning committee is currently reviewing the proceedings and preparing to make recommendations to ORD. Information and details regarding the conference proceedings and final outcomes can be found as they are made available on the web. ☞

<http://www.epa.gov/ord>

For additional information on the SEJ Conference please contact: James M. Younger, EPA New England Director of the Office of Civil Rights & Urban Affairs at:

[younger.james@epa.gov](mailto:younger.james@epa.gov) or 617-918-1061.

## Completion of EJ Training and Availability of EJ Functional Guidance Compendium

Since EPA New England launched its environmental justice training program in March 2002, 98 percent of the workforce has taken the training. The 1½-day EJ Awareness Training course consisted of several modules ranging from defining environmental justice to role playing in a public involvement workshop. Modules also highlighted regional and national environmental justice cases and achievements. One of the best received portions of the training was the community site tour in which participants had a chance to see and discuss environmental justice issues with an active local community-based organization in a nearby area of potential EJ concern.

A make-up session is being scheduled for the employees that have not yet taken the training and the region's EJ Council plans to offer environmental justice-related

lunch and learn sessions to encourage further discussion of the issues.

To complement this training, a new guidance document was published earlier this year which provides function-specific direction on how to integrate environmental justice principles, including fair treatment, meaningful involvement and public health protection, into the day-to-day activities of the region.

The EJ Compendium includes several tools designed to help staff identify when their work may have EJ implications and how to advance EJ principles through the agency's work.

The EPA New England EJ Compendium is accessible on the intranet to all employees. Training on the EJ Compendium is ongoing. EPA New England staff can contact their deputy office directors to learn about upcoming training opportunities on the EJ Compendium.

## Public Participation Training Offered in New England

In May, the EPA Office of Civil Rights in Washington, D.C., sponsored a free three-day training course on public participation in Boston. There were 24 participants in the course, which provided EPA, states, industry and public stakeholders an opportunity to learn together about best practices for public participation. Similar training courses were offered throughout the country by EPA's Office of Civil Rights.

The course was designed and approved by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting meaningful participation. The course was designed to provide participants with a thorough understanding of the principles of public participation, including good planning and communication. Student experiences helped to shape the class and the course included a great deal of student participation in case studies and simulations.

## Bridgeport Training for Property Owners on Lead Disclosure Law and Pre-Renovation Rule

In May, 30 members of the Greater Bridgeport Property Owners Association participated in a training workshop provided by EPA New England and the Connecticut Department of Health on compliance with lead-based paint disclosure laws. More information on lead poisoning prevention and both federal and Connecticut lead disclosure laws can be found at:

<http://www.epa.gov/ne/topics/pollutants/lead.html>

[http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Lead/Prevention/lead\\_prevntion.htm](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Lead/Prevention/lead_prevntion.htm)



*EPA New England employees gather outside the office of Alternatives for Community and Environment in Roxbury, Mass., to begin a walking tour of the neighborhood as part of one of the last Environmental Justice Awareness courses this past winter.*



# Q&A

## Diesel Exhaust and Your Health

### Q. What is diesel exhaust?

**A.** Diesel exhaust contains significant levels of small particles known as particulate matter (PM). It is composed of either gas or particle phases, both are commonly found throughout the environment and considered air toxics because of the human health risks they pose. The size of diesel particulates that are of the greatest health concern are those that are in the categories of fine and ultra fine particles.

### Q. How does diesel exhaust affect me and my family?

**A.** The fine and ultra fine particles in diesel exhaust can pass through the nose and throat and lodge themselves in the lungs. This oftentimes leads to irritation and injury, posing a serious health problem. In addition to aggravating respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis, these fine and ultra fine particles can cause lung damage and, in some instances, can lead to premature death. According to an EPA assessment, long term inhalation exposure is likely to pose a lung cancer hazard to humans and short term exposures can cause irritation and inflammatory symptoms of a transient nature.

### Q. Who is most affected by diesel exhaust?

**A.** Children, the elderly and individuals with existing heart or lung disease, asthma or other respiratory problems are most sensitive to air pollution from diesel exhaust. In New England alone

more than 1.7 million children ride a bus to and from school every day. While school buses are one of the safest, most effective ways to transport children to and from school, like all diesel vehicles, they emit pollution. Children are more susceptible to air pollution than healthy adults because their respiratory systems are still developing and they have a faster breathing rate.

### Q. How does diesel exhaust get into and effect the environment?

**A.** Diesel engines are the third largest human-made source of fine particles, contributing more than 20 percent of directly emitted fine particles in New England. People are exposed to diesel PM from both on-road and off-road (i.e., construction vehicles, farm equipment, boats and trains) exhaust that is directly emitted from diesel engines.

### Q. Why is diesel exhaust considered an EJ issue?

**A.** Pollution from diesel exhaust and the inhalation of diesel PM is of particular concern in urban communities. Low-income residents, and often people of color, are more likely to live near freeways, truck distribution centers and other areas with heavy diesel truck traffic.

### Q. What is being done about diesel exhaust?

**A.** EPA New England is working with the New England states and with others to reduce diesel emissions through grants, anti-idling programs, voluntary diesel retrofits, diesel testing, general outreach and enforcement. Through EPA's Clean School Bus USA program, EPA has awarded communities in New England funds to upgrade school buses with advanced pollution control equipment. School bus retrofit projects are underway or planned in Medford, Mass., Stamford, Conn., Warwick, R.I., Manchester and Nashua, N.H., and several communities in Maine. These retrofit projects will substantially reduce soot and other pollutant emissions from

school buses in these communities. More information on EPA's Clean School Bus USA program is available online at: <http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/> Toyota Motor Corporation is making \$20 million of new funding available this fall to school districts interested in retrofitting school buses and purchasing ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel. The funds are being provided through an enforcement case settlement EPA negotiated last year with Toyota. For more information, visit Toyota's Clean Buses for Kids website at: <http://www.cleanbusesforkids.com>

### Q. What can you do to reduce diesel emissions?

**A.** Fortunately there are many things that people can do to reduce harmful diesel exhaust emissions. EPA and the New England states have prepared educational materials about diesel exhaust and strategies to reduce these emissions. Using these materials, you can work with local officials, including school districts, to establish anti-idling programs. In addition, you can encourage your school district and others to retrofit school buses with advanced pollution control equipment. For more information, including anti-idling tips and strategies, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel>



*Diesel emissions come from both on-road and off-road sources.*

# GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Center for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research at Harvard Receives Largest Environmental Research Grant Ever Awarded by EPA in New England

In July, the EPA and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) announced funding for the Center for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research at the Harvard University School of Public Health. The Children's Center will receive \$7.8 million, or about \$1.5 million a year, for the next five years. The Children's Center is being funded as part of a long-term effort to promote and develop targeted scientific research on key issues pertaining to health effects for children resulting from exposure to environmental contaminants.

The Children's Center will focus its initial research on how exposure to heavy metals at the Tar Creek Superfund site in Oklahoma may affect the health of children living there. Unlike many studies that



*A remediated playground at the Tar Creek Superfund site in Oklahoma. The Children's Center will focus its initial research on children's health in the area.*

investigate the health effects of a single chemical, the new center will study how exposure to mixtures of chemicals affect health.

By partnering with NIEHS on the research grants, EPA is seeking to capitalize on broad-based institutional

expertise. NIEHS is part of the federal National Institutes of Health and the Department of Health and Human Services. Together with EPA, the two agencies funded eight children's environmental health research centers in 1998 and another four in 2001.

This new center will build on the legacy established by these earlier centers. The Center for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research at the Harvard School of Public Health will focus on addressing whether a mixture of toxic metals is having an adverse effect on childhood development in a real world setting. The investigators will evaluate the factors that can modify the amount of toxins that enter the body and how they may harm pregnant women and young children.

## EPA Grants Support Environmental Justice in New England

Over the summer and early fall, EPA announced seven new grants awarded to New England organizations and a university working toward environmental justice.

Two community-based organizations received \$100,000 through the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program for the following projects:

- **Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Model**  
The Coalition for A Better Acre, Lowell, Mass.
- **Vietnamese Nail Salon Health Project**  
The Pioneer Valley Project Inc., Springfield, Mass.

In addition, five grants were awarded through the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program:

- **Business and Community Environmental Justice Roundtable on Chelsea Creek (\$15,000)**  
Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, East Boston, Mass.
- **Springfield Housing Organization and Health Action Project (\$15,000)**  
The Pioneer Valley Project Inc., Springfield, Mass.
- **Building Awareness and Providing Alternatives to Household Toxics in Worcester's Low-income and Minority Neighborhoods (\$15,000)**  
Regional Environmental Council, Worcester, Mass.

*continued on page 8*



*(From left) Deputy Regional Administrator Ira Leighton with the recipients of an EJ Collaborative Problem Solving Cooperative Agreement: Dorcas Grigg-Saito, Executive Director of the Lowell Community Health Center; Laura Buxbaum, Interim Executive Director of the Coalition for a Better Acre; and Linda Silka, Co-Director of the Center for Family, Work and Community at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell.*

## Office Notes *cont.*

### EJ Awards

The 2004 Environmental Merit Awards were presented on Earth Day in April to individuals, governmental affiliates and community, academic and non-profit organizations that demonstrated outstanding efforts in preserving New England's environment. This year, three environmental organizations were recognized by EPA New England for their superior efforts to promote environmental justice: **Healthy Public Housing Initiative** in Boston, Mass., **Connecticut Parents United for a Lead Safe Environment** in Hartford, Conn., and **Lead Safe Homes.info** in Boston, Mass.

The 2003 Regional Honor Awards held in June recognized the following EPA New England teams and individuals for their outstanding efforts in environmental justice related projects: **Healthy Communities Grant Program Team**, Bronze Medal Award; **Office of Environmental Stewardship Lead Team**, Bronze Medal Award; **Regional Environmental Justice Training Team**, Bronze Medal Award; **Rhona Julien**, Bronze Medal Award, **Sharon Molden**, Bronze Medal Award; **Molly Magoon**, Environmental Justice Award; and **Davina Wysin**, Environmental Justice Award.



- **Community Based Research in Quinsigamond Village (\$25,000)**  
Regional Environmental Council, Worcester, Mass.

- **Testing, Transfer and Transformation of Brownfields in Mass. along Chelsea Creek (\$25,000)**  
Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, East Boston, Mass. ☹

Please refer to EPA New England's Environmental Justice Program website for additional information on current and past environmental justice grants: <http://www.epa.gov/ne/ej/index.html>

### Brownfields Grants Announced

In March, EPA awarded over \$547,000 in Brownfields Job Training Grants to three organizations; the City of Lewiston, Maine, Groundwork Providence in Rhode Island and the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board in Lawrence, Mass. These New England organizations were among 16 nationally selected recipients that will train 1000 individuals living in low-income neighborhoods near Brownfields sites in a variety of Brownfields-related areas including hazardous waste and safety, lead and asbestos abatement and environmental sampling. Following completion of the training course, participants will receive job placement assistance from the grantees and their partners.

In addition, EPA recently awarded \$8.6 million in Brownfields grants to New England municipalities and organizations. A total of 39 grants were awarded in six states including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

For additional information and further details regarding individual awards please visit the Brownfields website: <http://www.epa.gov/ne/brownfields/index.html>



(From left) Regional Administrator Robert W. Varney, Amir Ingram, Molly Magoon, Christine Tilly and Deputy Regional Administrator Ira Leighton.



## Massachusetts Environmental Justice Conference Promoted Clean Manufacturing

On Sept. 18, the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance and Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) hosted a conference on how cleaner manufacturing can be used to improve the local economy and minimize the health impacts on the community and environment.

As an important and necessary part of its Environmental Justice Program, EOEA recognizes that it must be committed to the task of minimizing environmental impacts that are associated with job growth and at the same time promote economic opportunity. The conference was a collaborative effort to advance and promote cleaner manufacturing. Cleaner manufacturing is based on preventing or decreasing the amount of pollution made from manufacturing processes by using little or no toxic chemicals. It strives to incorporate the following components: waste reduction, non-polluting production, energy efficiency, safe and healthy work environments and environmentally sound products and packaging.

The one-day conference held at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., entitled, *Promoting Clean Jobs & Neighborhood Change: Building Economic and Environmental Justice*, featured speaker presentations, exhibits and workshops that provided participants with tools to understand green technology, develop partnerships with business and attract green business using funding from local, state and federal sources.

The conference provided information to community groups and other interested parties about the options and benefits of clean and green

manufacturing. In addition, the conference successfully offered strategies and tools to be used to attract cleaner manufacturing, clean-up existing facilities and understand the relationship between cleaner manufacturing approaches and healthier, more liveable and sustainable neighborhoods.

Over seventy individuals from Lawrence, Holyoke, New Bedford and Boston, Mass.,

Cleaner manufacturing can be used to improve the local economy and minimize the health impacts on the community and environment.

including members of the community, students and researchers, participated in the one-day conference. Two graduate students, David Schmidt of Clark University and Yve Torrie of Tufts University, are researching the outcomes of the breakout sessions as part of their thesis projects. Their research will be used to prepare a white paper of recommendations to promote cleaner manufacturing.

For additional information on the conference or to find out more about the Massachusetts regional EJ teams please contact Kwabena Kyei-Aboagye at: [kwabena.kyei-aboagye@state.ma.us](mailto:kwabena.kyei-aboagye@state.ma.us) or Sue Lanza at: [susan.lanza@state.ma.us](mailto:susan.lanza@state.ma.us)



(From left) John Warner, Director of the University of Massachusetts-Lowell's Green Chemistry Program, and Ken Geiser, Co-Director of the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, discuss why the audience should care about green chemistry.

## EPA/DOJ Enforcement Cases Bring Clean Air Benefits to Boston

The EPA, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office announced \$7.4 in enforcement settlements this year that will result in significant air and water quality improvements in the greater Boston area. In January, a \$6 million enforcement settlement was reached with a local power plant that will reduce pollution from school buses and commuter trains, restore a salt marsh and construct a commuter bike path. In March, a \$1.4 million enforcement settlement was reached with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) that will reduce idling of MBTA buses, reduce pollution from the commuter rail trains and provide land for a bike path.

In a settlement stemming from air quality violations over a five-year period at the Mystic Station power plant in Everett, plant owner Exelon Mystic LLC agreed to pay a \$1 million civil penalty and fund more than \$5 million of environmental projects in the Boston area, including providing:

- \$3.25 million to retrofit 500 Boston school buses with pollution control equipment and supply them with ultra-low polluting diesel fuel. The project will benefit more than 28,000 school children who ride the buses every day by reducing tailpipe emissions from the buses by more than 90 percent, or more than 30 tons a year. Upon completion in 2005, Boston will be the first major city in the country to have retrofitted its entire school bus fleet.
- \$1.25 million for pollution control improvements to virtually all of the

commuter trains operating out of Boston North Station rail terminal.

- \$250,000 to build a commuter bike path over the Amelia Earhart Dam on the Mystic River. The new bike path over the dam will connect existing bike paths in Everett and Somerville, Mass.
- \$250,000 to restore one acre of an urban salt marsh on along Mill Creek in Chelsea, Mass.
- \$118,600 to conduct an environmental feasibility study to identify possible restoration activities along the Malden River.

In another settlement stemming from numerous air and water violations, including excessive idling of dozens of diesel buses in 2002, unpermitted discharges into the Mystic and other Boston-area rivers and failure to develop oil spill control plans at multiple Boston-area facilities, the MBTA agreed to pay a fine of \$328,274 and undertake the following two projects:

- A project valued at \$1 million to operate 33 commuter trains at Boston South Station on lower-polluting low sulfur diesel fuel for at least three years. The cleaner fuel will eliminate about 32 tons of particulate pollution and 429 tons of sulfur dioxide from the Boston area over 3 years.
- Donating an easement on one acre strip of land so an existing Mystic River bike path can be extended to reach the Sullivan Square subway station from Draw 7 Park in Somerville, Mass.



*Regional Administrator Robert W. Varney announces the enforcement settlement reached in March with the MBTA.*

In addition, the settlement requires MBTA to prevent future environmental violations by implementing an formal Environmental Management System for all of its operations and meet the five-minute idling limit for all of its 995 buses immediately except on very cold days. By December 2006, MBTA will meet the limit on very cold days as well. Excessive idling is a major health concern because diesel exhaust is a probable carcinogen that can trigger asthma and respiratory illness.

Several MBTA bus yards are concentrated in neighborhoods of Boston with significant asthma problems, including Roxbury, which has an asthma hospitalization rate 178 percent above the state average.

# Publication Updates

## EPA Reports

***Pollution Prevention Practices for Nail Salons: A Guide to Protect the Health of Nail Salon Workers and their Working Environment (May 2004)***, is a guidance document that provides information on chemicals that are typically found in nail salon products and their potential health effects. It also recommends many best shop practices that a salon should consider adopting to reduce or minimize potential health and environmental effects inside the shop. Available in English and Vietnamese, and forthcoming in Korean, at: <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/dfe/pubs/index.htm#salons>

***EPA Needs to Consistently Implement the Intent of the Executive Order on Environmental Justice (March 2004)***, an evaluation report issued by EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG), which finds that EPA has not fully implemented Executive Order 12898 nor consistently integrated environmental justice into its day-to-day operations. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2004/20040301-2004-P-00007.pdf>

***Response to the Recommendations Provided in the OIG Evaluation Report (June 2004)***, a report issued by the EPA's Acting Deputy Administrator in response to the aforementioned OIG report. The response includes an attached Environmental Justice Program Comprehensive Management Study and asserts that EPA has demonstrated its commitment to ensure that minority and/or low-income communities do not bear a disproportionate burden of environmental harms and risks. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/oeca/resources/publications/ej/oig-report-ej-cover-memo-response-6-8-04.pdf>

***2001-2002 Environmental Justice Biennial Report: Constructive Engagement and Collaborative Problem-Solving (April 2003)***, is the third biennial report issued by the EPA's

Office of Environmental Justice and offers a retrospective look at EPA's many project and activities related to environmental justice across the country. Available at:

<http://www.epa.gov/oeca/resources/publications/ej/ej-biennial-report-2002.pdf>

## Other Reports

***REACH 2010 Surveillance for Health Status in Minority Communities-United States, 2001-2002 (August 2004)***, this surveillance provides information regarding the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010 Risk Factor Survey, which is conducted annually in minority communities across the United States. The survey focuses on four minority populations: blacks, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders and American Indians. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5306a1.htm>

***African Americans and Climate Change: An Unequal Burden (July 2004)***, a report published by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation which finds that African Americans are already disproportionately burdened by health effects of climate change even though they are less responsible than other citizens because they emit less greenhouse gas. Available at: [http://www.redefiningprogress.org/newpubs/2004/CBCF\\_REPORT\\_F.pdf](http://www.redefiningprogress.org/newpubs/2004/CBCF_REPORT_F.pdf)

***Asthma in New England, Part II: Children (January 2004)***, an asthma surveillance study prepared by the New England Asthma Regional Council which finds that one in every nine children in New England, and nearly one in every five households with children, has been affected by asthma. Childhood asthma rates in New England were found to be higher among families with lower household incomes and among households with a black or

Hispanic adult respondent. Available at: <http://www.asthmaregionalcouncil.org/>

***Environmental Justice for All: A 50-State Survey of Legislation, Policies and Initiatives (January 2004)***, a survey produced by the Public Law Research Institute at the University of California Hastings College of Law and the American Bar Association, lists each state's environmental justice efforts. Available at: <http://www.abanet.org/irr/committees/environmental>

## Book

***Measuring Racial Discrimination (2004)***, is a book published by the National Research Council which evaluates the current research methodologies for a wide range of circumstances in which racial discrimination may occur and makes recommendations to better assess the presence and effects of discrimination.

## Multi-media

***Communities and Environmental Law DVD***, a 20-minute DVD in both English and Spanish that depicts how citizens can learn about environmental laws and use them as tools to benefit their communities. The DVD was produced in by the Environmental Law Institute, United Church of Christ and the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice with funding from the EPA. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/ncepi/ordering.htm>

***A Breath of Air: What Pollution is Doing to Our Children***, a 30-minute documentary in Spanish and English that describes the results of a children's health study being conducted in California. The video is funded by the California Air Resources Board with additional support from National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and EPA. Order VHS and DVD copies at: [http://www-apps.niehs.nih.gov/coepre/MatL\\_PDF551\\_600/AN000588.pdf](http://www-apps.niehs.nih.gov/coepre/MatL_PDF551_600/AN000588.pdf)



## EPA's New England Office Announces Strong Enforcement Results for 2003

The EPA's New England office announced strong enforcement results last year, including a record amount of money spent by violators on innovative environmental projects as part of their settlements.

For the second consecutive year, the amount paid by violators to settle enforcement cases was near an all-time high. In fact, fiscal years 2002 and 2003 are the two highest totals in the past 10 years. Violators paid more than \$12.24 million in the most recent fiscal year, including a record \$8.7 million spent on so-called Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) that focused on such problems as skyrocketing asthma rates, diesel air pollution and loss of wetlands.

Among the projects funded: building a new garbage transfer station with stringent air quality controls in

Boston's Roxbury neighborhood; providing hazardous materials training to fire departments in Connecticut; installing diesel particulate filters on all Rhode Island's public transit buses; and restoring 54 acres of freshwater wetlands in southern Maine. The remaining \$3.55 million of settlement money was paid in civil penalties to the U.S. Treasury.

The agency's regional office also carried out 700 inspections last year, a 33 percent increase from the previous year. One of the areas with an increased emphasis was compliance with federal lead paint disclosure laws. EPA staff carried out more than 100 inspections affecting more than 40,000 housing units to ensure that property owners and property managers were notifying tenants and prospective buyers of

potential lead paint threats. Many of the inspections were done at the request of state environmental and public health agencies. Several significant enforcement actions were taken as a result of those inspections.

"Tough environmental enforcement is alive and well in New England," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA New England's office. "The EPA, together with the states, has shown that it will not hesitate to take aggressive action against companies, facilities and property owners that pollute the environment and jeopardize public health."

EPA and state environmental agencies are jointly responsible for the enforcement of environmental laws, and work closely together to ensure an effective enforcement presence in New England.

## Latest Toxic Release Data Show Drop in Pollution Discharges, Multi-Year Trend Continues in All New England States Under Community Right-To-Know

The most recent data show that releases of toxic chemicals by industrial sources in all six New England states continue to decline. The latest report of the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), released in June by EPA, confirms that for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont there has been approximately a 90 percent decline in releases of more than 650 tracked chemicals since 1988. Nationally, chemical releases have declined by approximately 57 percent.

These data, made available each year to the public and communities throughout the United States, covers pollution releases to air, water and land by power plants, manufacturers and other facilities which employ 10 or more workers and exceed thresh-

holds for TRI chemicals. During 2002, just under 24.9 million pounds of chemicals were released in the six New England states.

"Each of the New England states continue to see declining levels of emissions, even as the number of facilities reporting has increased," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator for EPA's New England Office. "It is extremely important for the public to know what chemicals are being released in or near their communities. Careful analysis of this data confirms that over time, the amount of toxic substances released to the air, land and water continue to decline in our states."

The current data, for the year 2002, represent the third year that reporting has been required for a

group of persistent and bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs) that includes mercury, dioxins, PCBs and polycyclic aromatic compounds. This is the second year that reporting has been required for lead and lead compounds. Persistent and bioaccu-

*continued on page 13*



[www.epa.gov/tri](http://www.epa.gov/tri)

If you want information about toxic chemical releases in your neighborhood, use the TRI Explorer.

## Toxic Release Data *cont.*

mulative chemicals do not readily break down in the environment and can build up in living organisms, especially higher in the food chain in fish, wildlife and other animals and humans.

The current data includes information on releases and other wastes for more than 650 chemicals and chemical categories that companies are required to report under EPA's TRI Program. The data includes toxics released at the company's facility and those transported to disposal facilities off site. All manufacturing companies, as well as coal and oil fired power plants, that produce or use above the threshold limit for any chemical are required to participate. Thresholds range from thousands of pounds to 100 or 10 pounds for PBTs, down to 0.1 grams for dioxin-like compounds.

The reporting of data to the TRI is required under the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, passed in 1986. The TRI provides the amount, location and type of release to the environment—whether a pollutant is emitted in to the air, discharged in to the water or released onto land. It also includes information on waste shipped off-site for disposal or further treatment. The TRI has been credited with arming communities with valuable knowledge and encouraging facilities to reduce their releases of toxic chemicals into the environment through source reduction and pollution prevention measures.

TRI data is accessible online with the TRI Explorer. Using this, interested parties can search TRI data and generate four types of reports: state fact sheets, release reports, waste transfer reports and waste quantity reports. Information can be accessed for specific states, chemicals, years, media or industrial sectors. ☞

## Office Notes *cont.*

### EPA and National Urban League Sign Memorandum of Understanding

On Sept. 29, the EPA and the National Urban League signed a memorandum of understanding to work together on protecting children in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities from environmental health risks. The EPA and the National Urban League will be working collaboratively to protect the environment and raise awareness of health issues that impact children.



### EJ Online

Both EPA New England and EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance (OECA) maintain **E-Mail Notification Systems** on environmental justice-related news, funding opportunities and events. Subscribing to these free notification systems is easy:

- For EPA New England's EJ News notification service, send an e-mail indicating that you would like to receive EJ News to: [Wysin.Davina@epa.gov](mailto:Wysin.Davina@epa.gov)

- For OECA's e-mail notification services, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/listserv.html>

The **Environmental Justice Geographic Assessment Tool** is now available online. This new tool replaces the EnviroJustice Mapper with new features and technology. The tool provides access to a wealth of environmental information directly on your desktop. Use it to map various types of environmental

information, including air releases, drinking water, toxic releases, hazardous wastes, water discharge permits and Superfund sites. Simply use the tool to select a geographic area and you will be able to view the different facilities that are present within that area. Try the tool at: <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/ej>

EPA's nine program offices and 10 regional offices have developed **Environmental Justice Action Plans**. These action plans represent the commitments of each office over the next 1-5 years. The key elements of the action plans are: management accountability, internal/external stakeholder involvement, data collection/management, training, environmental justice assessment and evaluation. It is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/oeca/resources/reports/actionplans/ej/index.html>

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## Web Resources

EPA New England Environmental Justice Program website  
<http://www.epa.gov/ne/steward/ejprog/index.html>

National Office of Environmental Justice  
<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/index.html>

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council  
<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/nejac/index.html>

National Office of Civil Rights  
<http://www.epa.gov/civilrights/aboutocr.htm>

### External links disclaimer

This newsletter provides links to non-EPA websites. These links provide additional information that may be useful or interesting and are being provided consistent with the intended purpose of this newsletter. However, EPA cannot attest to the accuracy of the information provided by linked sites. Providing links to a non-EPA website does not constitute an endorsement by EPA or any of its employees of the sponsors of this site or the information or products presented on the site.

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